

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 205141
ORIGIN DHA-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 PM-05 SS-15 SP-02 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 L-03 PRS-01 SY-05 VO-03 SCA-01
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DRAFTED BY D/HA/ORM:W.G.METSON:DIW
APPROVED BY D/HA:J.L.CARLIN
D/HA/ORM:S.C.LOWMAN
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O 260110Z AUG 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO COMNAVBASE GUANTANAMO BAY CUBA IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE IMMEDIATE
SECDEF
CHINFO WASH DC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, HA

SUBJECT: HAITIANS AT GUANTANAMO : PRESS GUIDANCE

REF: A) P 242031Z AUG 77; B) PORT AU PRINCE 3173

FOR MS. HANSON AND MR. ARTHUR

DEPARTMENT ACCEPTS PROPOSED GUIDANCE REF A AS MODIFIED BY
REF B EXCEPT QUESTION I WHERE REF A VERSION KEPT AND
LANGUAGE ADDED.

TEXT FOLLOWS:

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BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

A. QUESTION: WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHO DO YOU REPRESENT?
WHAT OFFICE ARE YOU FROM?

ANSWER: WE ARE A TEAM FROM THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZA-
TION SERVICE AND THE DEPT OF STATE. WE ARE HERE TO CONDUCT
ROUTINE INTERVIEWS OF A GROUP OF 101 HAITIANS RESCUE BY

THE NAVAL FORCES AT GUANTANAMO.

B. (Q) WHY WERE THE HAITIANS BROUGHT INTO NAVAL BASE IN GTMO?

(A) WE UNDERSTAND THAT IT'S STANDARD PROCEDURE FOR ANY NAVAL BASE OR U.S. NAVAL SHIP TO GIVE ASSISTANCE TO ANY SHIP OR BOAT IN DISTRESS, WHICH WAS THE SITUATION IN THIS CASE.

C. (Q) IS THIS CASE RELATED TO THE TWO HAITIAN BOATS THAT RECENTLY LANDED IN MIAMI?

(A) ONLY IN THAT BOTH GROUPS ARE APPARENTLY PART OF LONG-STANDING PATTERN OF ATTEMPTED ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION BY PEOPLE FROM THE POORER PARTS OF HAITI SEEKING BETTER ECONOMIC PROSPECTS ELSEWHERE.

D. (Q) WHAT'S THE STATUS OF THE HAITIANS NOW?

(A) THE HAITIANS ARE CURRENTLY BEING HOUSED AND GIVEN MORE THAN ADEQUATE FOOD, CLOTHING, AND MEDICAL ATTENTION. THERE ARE NUMEROUS MEDICAL PROBLEMS PRESENT IN THE GROUP.

E. (Q) ARE THE HAITIANS GOING TO BE ALLOWED TO STAY HERE? LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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(A) THEY CANNOT REMAIN INDEFINITELY IN GUANTANAMO. THEY WERE ADMITTED BECAUSE THEIR BOAT WAS BADLY LEAKING. INSPECTION OF THE BOAT REVEALS THAT IN ITS PRESENT CONDITION IT IS UNSEAWORTHY. SINCE THEY CANNOT LEAVE ON THEIR BOAT, WE ARE NOW ATTEMPTING TO DETERMINE WHEN THEY WILL DEPART GUANTANAMO.

F. (Q) WHERE WILL THEY GO WHEN THEY LEAVE GUANTANAMO?

(A) THAT WILL DEPEND UPON THE REVIEW OF THE INFORMATION OBTAINED IN THE INTERVIEWS. (IF PRESSED) WE EXPECT THAT MOST, IF NOT ALL, WILL RETURN TO HAITI.

G. (Q) CAN WE SEE THE BOAT THE HAITIANS ARRIVED IN?

(A) YES, THE BOAT IS AT FTG LANDING.

H. (Q) CAN WE TALK WITH THE HAITIANS AND SEE WHERE THEY ARE TEMPORARILY BEING HOUSED?

(A) IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR YOU TO VISIT WHERE THEY ARE

BEING HOUSED PRIVATELY. SHOULD YOU DESIRE TO TALK WITH SOME OF THEM INDIVIDUALLY, WE WILL MAKE AVAILABLE A CREOLE-SPEAKING INTERPRETER AND ANY HAITIAN WILLING TO VOLUNTARILY MEET WITH YOU.

I. (Q) HAS ANY HAITIAN REQUESTED ASYLUM?

(A) SORRY, WE HAVE NO COMMENT, BUT FOR YOUR INFORMATION,

IT IS THE GENERAL POLICY OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO MAINTAIN THE CONFIDENTIALTY OF REQUESTS FOR ASYLUM BY ALIENS FROM ANY COUNTRY, PARTICULARLY SINCE IF THE CLAIM IS DISALLOWED HE WILL BE RETURNED TO HIS HOME COUNTRY.

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J. (Q) HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN TO STAY IN GTMO?

(A) WE ARE REVIEWING THE SITUATION AND CONSULTING WITH WASHINGTON AND PLAN TO DEPART IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

K. (Q) WITH THE EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS BY THE ADMINISTRATION, DO YOU CONTEMPLATE SENDING INDIVIDUALS BACK TO A COUNTRY SUCH AS HAITI WHICH HAS BEEN KNOWN AS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATOR? ISN'T THIS INCONSISTENT WITH THE HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY?

(A) THE MERE FACT THAT AN INDIVIDUAL IS FROM A COUNTRY THAT HAS BEEN KNOWN TO HAVE A "HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM" DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT A SPECIFIC INDIVIDUAL FROM THAT COUNTRY HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF "POLITICAL" HARASSMENT. WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN ASSURANCES BY THE HAITIAN GOVERNMENT THAT INDIVIDUALS, SUCH AS THESE, CAN SAFELY RETURN TO HAITI AND WILL NOT BE PUNISHED FOR THEIR ILLEGAL DEPARTURE FROM THAT COUNTRY.

L. (Q) WHEN DID YOU GET THE ASSURANCES FROM THE HAITIAN GOVERNMENT THAT HAITIAN NATIONALS WHO ILLEGALLY DEPARTED HAITI WOULD NOT FACE ANY RETRIBUTIONS UPON THEIR RETURN?

(A) ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS, OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, WHICH INCIDENTALLY WAS PUBLICLY RELEASED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF APRIL 19, 1977, THE HAITIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BOTH FORMALLY AND INFORMALLY ASSURED US THAT HAITIAN NATIONALS WOULD NOT BE PERSECUTED FOR THEIR ILLEGAL DEPARTURE FROM THAT COUNTRY. THE HAITIAN GOVERNMENT IS AWARE OF THIS GROUP'S PRESENCE ON GUANTANAMO AND HAS GIVEN SPECIFIC ASSURANCES THAT NO ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST THESE INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIR ILLEGAL
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DEPARTURE AND THAT UPON THEIR RETURN TO HAITI THEY WILL
BE ASSISTED BY BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE HAITIAN RED
CROSS ON RETURNING TO THEIR HOMES SHOULD THEY WISH TO
DO SO.

END UNCLASSIFIED

CHRISTOPHER

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